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TAJIKISTAN

CASE STUDY

Citizens Receive Assistance

A USAID grant helped educate citizens about the services available to them from the local government.



Urnoi Juraeva is discussing her situation with the head of Istaravhan social protection department. Photo: PACT Inc.

USAID-funded meetings and consultations helped residents from various rural and urban communities all over Tajikistan address the issues of their concern and receive support from the local government.

Challenge

Many residents of Tajikistan have no knowledge of the role of and opportunities provided to them by the government's social protection agencies, and cannot effectively exercise their rights. Such behavior stems from the 1992-1998 civil war, when people did not seek help from the government structures. Thirty-five-year old Urnoi Juraeva in Jamoat "Poshkent," Istaravhan City, was one of the many that had no knowledge of the government support available to her family. Urnoi's husband Akbar had been sick for a long time and needed regular care and medicine. To take care of her husband, their three small children, and her 80-year old father in law, Urnoi had to quit her job, thus losing the only income the family had had. The family depended on the charity from neighbors for the place to live, clothes for the children, and food.

Initiative

To increase public awareness of available government services, the USAID civic initiatives support program, implemented by PACT Inc. provided a grant to the National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan for an information campaign. The association arranged meetings with over 1,000 individuals across the country from rural and urban areas to help the local governments learn about the citizens' concerns. The association engaged representatives of local authorities, social protection and rights departments, and heads of jamoats in these meetings. The residents had an opportunity to ask questions, share opinions, and receive answers from their government representatives. The association specialists combined these meetings with consultations for residents on their civil rights and ways they can receive social assistance.

Result

Upon learning about the USAID-supported meetings with the local government officials, Urnoi decided to try her luck and see if she can get some advice or support. When the head of Istaravhan's social protection department heard her story, he invited Urnoi to bring the family's documents to the town's social protection department to arrange a care-giver's pension for Urnoi so that she can take care for her sick husband.

Through this USAID-supported activity, at least 20 other individuals received assistance in solving their problems through these meetings, and thousands received information on the issues important to their communities. The activity also helped the local governments become more aware of their constituents' needs and concerns.